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U.S. Patent and Trademark Office*U. S. and Foreign Patents, Trademarks, Copyrights, Computer Law, Trade Secrets, Licensing, and Litigation***FACSIMILE TRANSMISSION COVER SHEET****DATE: March 6, 2003 OUR REF: SIP-106-A YOUR REF: USSN 09/619,547****TO (COMPANY): US Patent & Trademark Office, Group Art Unit 2834****ATTN: Examiner David W. Scheuermann****FROM: Joseph P. Carrier****FAX NO. CALLED: (703) 308-7724 NO. OF PAGES (Including this page) 2**We are also mailing you a confirmation copy of this material if this box is checked. ☐

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MESSAGE: The attached page is a **signed copy** of the signature page of the **AMENDMENT- B** which was submitted minutes ago. The signature page of the **AMENDMENT- B** as originally submitted was inadvertently not signed.

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Other Matters

The additional references cited by the Examiner (Maekawa and Kawano et al.) have been considered by applicant, but it is respectfully submitted that these additional references fail to overcome the deficiencies of Figs 15-16 and the Marchegiani and Umeda references relative to the claimed invention, as discussed above.

New claims 21-24 are believed to be allowable based on the foregoing arguments concerning the merits of claims 1 and 18, as well as on the merits of the limitations presented in the new claims.

Conclusion

In conclusion, applicant has overcome the Examiner's objection and rejections as presented in the Office Action; and moreover, applicant has considered all of the references of record, and it is respectfully submitted that the invention as defined by each of the present claims is clearly patentably distinct thereover.

The application is now believed to be in condition for allowance, and a notice to this effect is earnestly solicited.

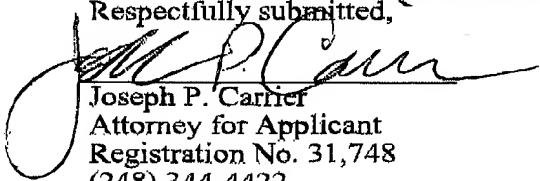
Favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested.

If the Examiner is not fully convinced of all of the claims now in the application, applicant respectfully requests that she telephonically contact applicant's undersigned representative to expeditiously resolve prosecution of the application.

Favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested.

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March 6, 2003

Respectfully submitted,


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MAR 6 2003

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